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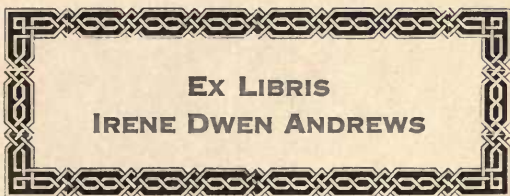
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CRUSADERS

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS
BY J. BERNARD McCARTHY



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TO MY MOTHER

THIS PLAY IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED

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BARNEY. I don't know, he's a terror. Every town and village in Ireland is knuckling under to him, an' the people taking the pledge in thousands.

MIKE. There is no doubt but he is a wonder. He could charm the heart out of a stone with that soft speech of his. Steve Moran ought to be the proud man. Who'd have thought that he'd have a genius in the family? 'Tis a quare world.

BARNEY. I don't know but that genius is a doubtful blessing, a sort of double-edged sword, cutting both ways. If you set a born simpleton to watch a pot boiling, you may be sure he'll see the job through, but if you tell a genius to do it, you're in dread that he will be making a steam ingine or something out of it. 'Tis a lot safer an' more comfortable to have an ordinary sort o' son.

MIKE. Faith, I won't go against you in that. I'd rather have a slow horse under me than one that might be quick and restive. Genius is as uncertain as cards.
(Enter STEVE MORAN from back.)

STEVE. Good-day, men. 'Tisn't often I see ye here so early.

MIKE. An' 'tis seldom we come, Steve, but we both rambled over on a little business to-day.

STEVE. Ye are both welcome, either for business or pleasure.

BARNEY. We know that, Steve; I want to ask you for the loan of your grey mare for to-morrow, that is, if you won't be putting her under the shafts yourself.

STEVE. I won't, then, and you can have her. Yes, with a heart and a half (*lighting pipe*). And what is your trouble, Mike?

MIKE. Some o' the boys were saying that maybe you wouldn't be coming to the Licensed Vintners' meeting on Monday, so I thought I'd ask you, just to make sure like.

STEVE (*thoughtfully*). Well, Mike, to tell you the truth, I don't care to go.

MIKE. But we have some very important business to transact; and 'twould never do to carry on without the President.

STEVE. I'm sorry I ever took the job, but, as you know, it was forced upon me.

MIKE. Never mind now. We have to get through it some way.

STEVE. If I thought that my own son would be coming here, preaching a temperance crusade, I'd have kept far and away from it altogether.

BARNEY. But how were you to know?

STEVE. True, how was I?

MIKE. Well, you'll be coming to the Vintners' meeting for this once, anyhow?

STEVE. I won't promise. I don't care to be mixed up in their business at such a time.

MIKE. 'Tis I know how matters stand with you; but if you don't turn up people will be talking an' saying that you want to back out. Sure, there's no harm in being a publican, and taking an interest in the trade.

STEVE. It isn't the way I'd choose for making a living if I had my choice, but I haven't.

BARNEY. And then the wise man makes the best of it.

MIKE. As you won't come. . . .

STEVE (*having come to a decision*). I'll come, don't be afraid. I'm not the man to back out of a thing, no, not even if I had fifty sons wanting to put down the drink.

MIKE (*pleased at having gained his point*). I wouldn't doubt you! Father Tom has his job, and you have yours. Both of ye must do your best.

BARNEY. If we all had the same opinions it would be a very dull world. 'Twill be a bad day for Ireland when we all agree, so it will.

MIKE. There you are again! You can't hear a word said but you want to drag politics into it.

STEVE. Don't waste your eloquence on him, Barney. Come along and I'll let you have the mare. (*They go out.*)

MIKE *lifts up his glass to see if any drink left in it; finding there is not, he puts it down with a sigh, but summons up a pleasant smile as* TESSIE MORAN—a bright-looking girl of about eighteen—*enters. She is dressed in outdoor costume, and carries a small parcel in one hand.*

TESSIE. Good-day, Mr. Hayes.

MIKE. Good-day to you. It does a body good to see you looking so fresh and sparkling.

TESSIE. Ah, there is no doubt of your nationality, Mr. Hayes.

MIKE (*puzzled*). My nationality?

TESSIE. That speech proclaims you Irish. We say such a lot of things we never mean.

MIKE. And if we said a lot of things we thought, the result would be worse. 'Tis only by saying what we don't think that we get on at all. Was it shopping you were?

He glances at the parcel which TESSIE is opening.

KATE MORAN comes in quietly.

TESSIE. Yes, I was at the draper's.

MRS. MORAN. And what were you getting there, child?

MIKE. Is that yourself, Mrs. Moran?

MRS. MORAN. What's left of me after struggling with the world. Did you hear me speaking to you, Tessie? (*Turning to her.*)

TESSIE. Yes, mother.

MRS. MORAN. Well, then, what have you got in the parcel?

TESSIE. A few odds and ends. I couldn't be looking shabby and Tom coming home.

MIKE. She was always fond of the brother, and good reason she had to be.

TESSIE. I got a lovely neckband that will just do with my new blouse. (*Taking out neckband.*)

MRS. MORAN. Don't be showing it now. Your father wouldn't like to have it reminding him of—(*suddenly*)—well, no matter.

TESSIE. But isn't he going to the railway station to meet Tom? Why the whole country will be there.

MIKE. An' the country beyond it. There will be a great turn out entirely, bands and banners and societies, all anxious to do honour to the Apostle of Temperance. Faith, a publican like myself feels out of it entirely. I feel as guilty as if I had murdered a man.

MRS. MORAN. Don't be romancing, Mike. We are all proud of Tom; but as things are we have to keep in the background while this temperance business is going on.

MIKE. As for myself, I hate to be left out of any excitement or sport, christening, wedding, wake, or funeral. It goes against my grain to see even a band playing, and me not being able to have a hand on the drumsticks.

TESSIE. And can't I wear the things, mother?

MIKE. Errah, let her put them on, ma'am. We were all young and fond of the finery once. I could never court a girl unless I had a new hat on.

MRS. MORAN. You can, Tessie; but don't be letting on to your father that you got them specially for that purpose.

TESSIE. All right, mother.

MIKE. Say what you will, ma'am, himself is proud of the boy.

MRS. MORAN. I know he is—and who wouldn't—with everybody calling him a second Father Mathew?

MIKE. The saviour of Ireland, the newspapers do be naming him.

MRS. MORAN. That's all very well for one side of the picture, but what of the poor publicans whose trade is being ruined? That is the way some people must look at it; that is the way *we* must look at it.

MIKE. So it is, God help us. Isn't it strange that someone must pay the piper for everything, and not always the people who dance the tunes?

MRS. MORAN. 'Tis the way of the world, Mike, and them things will be puzzling wiser heads than ours to the end of time.

MIKE. I won't be saying "no" to that. 'Tis a quare world. All we can learn about it isn't much, and it wouldn't do us any harm if we didn't learn that same.

MRS. MORAN (*smiling*). You must have been reading too much poetry lately.

MIKE. You'd have to be a very early riser to ketch me reading poetry. But I hear that a couple of Dublin fellahs will be spouting it at the Temperance Hall to-morrow. But, sure, they're teetotallers.

TESSIE (*who is trying on neckband before a small mirror on wall*). There will be a grand concert. Some of the convent girls are to sing duets.

MIKE. More power to their lungs. I could give them a stave of "The Cruiskeen Lawn" myself.

(*He starts humming it.*)

MRS. MORAN. Put away the fal-dals, girl. Don't you hear your father's footsteps in the yard?

(*TESSIE is taking off neckband as her father enters.*)

STEVE. What are you doing, Tessie?

TESSIE. Only trying on this neckband.

STEVE (*irritably*). Getting ready for the circus, I suppose. Take it off, girl.

MRS. MORAN. Steve, that's no way to talk at all. To think of you comparing. . . .

STEVE. Hush, woman, and don't be aggravating me. (*To MIKE, who has risen.*) Going so soon, Mike?

MIKE. Yes, I'll be getting under way. Now, you won't be backing out o' that meeting?

STEVE (*grimly*). No, I'll be there. I'll have no man call me a coward. (*TESSIE wraps up things in parcel.*)

MIKE. Good-bye to ye. (*He goes out.*)

(*STEVE sits down by fire and gazes broodingly into the coals.*)

MRS. MORAN. Indeed it's no harm to have that old gossip out of the house, so it isn't.

STEVE (*raising his head*). And why should you be turning on him like that?

MRS. MORAN. Because, like many more, 'tis rising you he is.

STEVE. Rising me?

MRS. MORAN. Yes, about Father Tom and the temperance. They want to get your anger up, and have you to try and prevent him from preaching here. That's their game.

STEVE. And aren't they right? Every man for himself in this world. And the publicans have families to support as well as others. (*Producing paper which he has brought in with him.*) Look here. In the last town in which Father Tom preached his temperance crusade eight publicans had to close up owing to the loss of trade.

MRS. MORAN (*lifting her hands in astonishment*). Merciful powers! Is that true?

STEVE. Read it for yourself. (*He points out paragraph, and she puts on her spectacles and reads.*) And that's what will be happening here shortly; and maybe ourselves will be the first to close. Then who'll give us the bit to eat? Why the devil should our own son be coming and taking the bread out of our mouths? ^{AA}

TESSIE. But he is not to be blamed.

MRS. MORAN. True, Tessie. When he started this crusade he never thought that we would one day be publicans.

STEVE. Badly off we'd be but for it. And glad enough to get it we were when the farm failed. If my brother—God rest his soul—didn't leave it to us when he died, 'tis at the side of the ditch we would be—or in the workhouse. Isn't that the truth?

TESSIE. But perhaps, father, we shall get on after all.

STEVE. Don't be talking foolish. How can we? It's as much as we can do as it is to keep our heads above water. You both know that. Who doesn't?

MRS. MORAN (*soothingly*). God is good. Don't be having the bad word, and we not knowing what is coming.

STEVE. I know what is coming—starvation. . . .

There's a sound outside, and TESSIE goes to window and looks out. She stands watching something for some time.

STEVE. Kate, everything goes against me, first the farm, now. . . .

MRS. MORAN. Yeh, don't be brooding, man. Shake it off.

TESSIE (*turning impulsively from window*). Oh, they are coming out of the Temperance Hall—such crowds! And hear the band.

(The playing of a band is heard faintly in the distance.)

STEVE (*goaded into anger*). Blast the band!

MRS. MORAN. Oh, Steve!

STEVE (*to TESSIE*). Come away from that window. Go to your room. Don't be giving any of your nonsense. A band and people cheering turns your head; but you'll soon know the difference. It may be a sort of holiday for them, but it's far more to us.

TESSIE, *crestfallen as a result of her hasty and unhappy words, goes out back.*

MRS. MORAN. Don't be too hard on the girl.

STEVE. In the name of Heaven, Kate, who wants to be hard on her or anyone? Even Tom, though he is

bringing all this trouble upon me? Don't I feel glowing with pride when I hear people praising him, and the newspapers printing long columns of his speeches, but. . . . (*bows his head on his hands, leaving sentence incomplete*).

MRS. MORAN. I understand, Steve, but we must bear up and not be meeting trouble half way. You will let Tessie and Willie Pat go to the station, won't you?

STEVE. Yes, *they* can go, but we are better here. At least Tessie can go. I don't suppose that Willie Pat will get off.

MRS. MORAN. No, they work him pretty hard at the office. . . . cruel hard for a lad of his years. Why, he wasn't off last night until nine o'clock.

STEVE. What are you talking about? I saw him making for the picture palace with some other young fellahs before eight. So that's what he told you. I'm afraid Willie Pat is mixing with bad company.

MRS. MORAN. But he wouldn't do anything really bad. He's a trifle wild, but. . . .

STEVE. He's too wild for my taste. But I'll talk matters over with him, he wants steadyng.

MRS. MORAN. 'Twould be a good thing to have a straight talk with him. Bad company is the ruination of many a youngster, if they are weak-willed.

STEVE. And he hasn't much backbone in him.

MRS. MORAN. Give him a chance. He's young yet.

STEVE. Now, if I still had the farm I'd have him under my eyes and get some good of him, but in an office he is carried away by the example of other wild youngsters.

MRS. MORAN. And some of them being well-to-do, he has to try and be as good as them, to be as big a man, as the saying is.

STEVE. Yes, and so spends the money he should bring home. The boy is easily led, for he's foolish.

MRS. MORAN. He hasn't a bit of Tom's way with him.

STEVE. And maybe we needn't be sorry for that. One clever man in a family is about as much as it can stand. (*Becoming cheerful.*) Mike Hayes says that the curse of this country is that she has too many geniuses for her size.

MRS. MORAN (*pleased at the return of his good humour*). That's right. Put the dark thoughts behind you, and take a brighter view of things. There's an old and true saying, "Never bid the devil good morrow until you meet him."

STEVE. There's a lot of wisdom in old sayings, sure enough. Well, I'll try and put the fret off my mind.

MRS. MORAN. What is the use of worrying, whatever happens? If the trouble is to come, it will come, and we needn't go to meet it.

STEVE (*rising*). I'll be taking a stroll to the forge, Kate. And (*placing a coin on table*) give that to Tessie to buy something. I'm thinking I took the girl too short; but I'm worried. . . . worried. (*He goes out to the yard slowly.*)

A few seconds later WILLIE PAT MORAN, a smartly, almost flashily-dressed young man of about nineteen, comes in at back. He is smoking a cigarette.

MRS. MORAN. Why, Willie Pat, what brings you home?

WILLIE PAT. I'll explain later on, mother. Mr. Sheedy, the secretary of the Temperance Society, wants to see father. Is he here?

MRS. MORAN. What is it about? The temperance celebrations?

WILLIE PAT. Something of that nature, I think.

MRS. MORAN. Then he had better tell it to me, if that will do. Your father is in none too pleasant a humour—small blame to him—and 'tis cross words they

might be having. Say to Mr. Sheedy that himself is out, but that I'll talk with him.

WILLIE PAT goes out. *His mother hastily dusts room and arranges chairs in order.* MR. SHEEDY, a tall, thin man, with an ascetic cast of features, comes in. He glances half nervously around, as if doubtful of his reception.

MRS. MORAN. How are you, Mr. Sheedy?

SHEEDY. Well, thank you, ma'am.

MRS. MORAN (*pulling forward a chair*). Won't you be sitting down?

SHEEDY. Thanks, I will. (*Seats himself.*)

MRS. MORAN. I suppose there is no use in asking you to have anything?

SHEEDY. Gracious, no! But a little soda water yes, I might try that.

MRS. MORAN *goes to door back and calls out, then returns to centre of room.*

MRS. MORAN. 'Tis a wonder you are not gone to the station with the Confraternity, Mr. Sheedy?

SHEEDY. That brings me to the object of my visit. I much regret to say that our preparations have been in vain. Father Tom is not coming by train as we had arranged

MRS. MORAN. You don't say so?

SHEEDY. Yes, he telephoned me to say that he wished to avoid the demonstration we had organized. I believe a letter which he received from home this morning made him come to that decision.

MRS. MORAN. Yes, his father wrote to him, and perhaps that upset him.

SHEEDY. Quite so. I fully comprehend. He must have reproached Father Tom. Well, Mrs. Moran, instead of coming by train, your son is motoring in quietly. He said I was to tell his people that he would be here before three o'clock.

MRS. MORAN. Thank God that he's coming quietly.

SHEEDY. It seems that he wishes to discuss matters with his father and you before he begins the crusade.

MRS. MORAN. That same is a comfort to me, so it is. Maybe he will smooth things over with his father, though God only knows how it can be done.

WILLIE PAT *brings in soda water and places it before SHEEDY ; then leaves the room.*

SHEEDY. It is a peculiar situation, Mrs. Moran. The temperance movement that is sweeping through the length and breadth of the land is fruitful with blessings, and, as a humble individual, I feel happy to be taking part in it. The licensed trade is losing, but the nation is gaining. If it is a choice between the salvation of Ireland—for we all know that if she is sober she is free—and the prosperity of the pernicious liquor traffic, the latter must go. We shall make a clean sweep of it. (*Suddenly recollecting himself.*) Excuse me, Mrs. Moran, I should not have said that. I meant nothing personal.

MRS. MORAN. Where no offence is intended none is taken, Mr. Sheedy. Every man must stick up for his own side. Will ye be having the great turn out to-morrow, or is Father Tom putting that off too?

SHEEDY. Oh, no. That must come off. The presentation of addresses will take place at the National Hotel, and afterwards there will be the procession through the town. Oh, it will be a great day, a great day for Iniscurragh. You should be a happy woman, ma'am. (*Drinking.*) Your health.

MRS. MORAN. Thank you, kindly.

SHEEDY. And, Mrs. Moran, don't, for the love of Heaven, try to interfere with Father Tom's crusade! He is sensitive and highly strung, and But I will say no more. No one would attempt to meddle with God's work, and that's the blessed work your son is doing. (*He rises to depart.* MRS. MORAN *moves to show him to the door, but he hesitates to pass out.*) Mrs. Moran,

would you be so kind as to leave me out the side door? It would not look well for a teetotalter to be seen leaving a public—I mean licensed hotel. Oh, thanks. Good-bye, Mrs. Moran.

MRS. MORAN (*as she shows him out side door*). Good-bye, and thanks for bringing the news. (*Closing the door, she comes back to centre of room.*)

WILLIE PAT *enters from bar.*

WILLIE PAT. Is he gone?

MRS. MORAN. Yes, he went out on his tippy-toes before he'd be seen . . . the poor man.

WILLIE PAT. What do you mean by "poor man"?

MRS. MORAN. Yeh, how else can you speak of a man who drinks your health in soda water?

WILLIE PAT. What news did he bring?

MRS. MORAN. That Tom is coming here by motor about three o'clock. He may be dropping in on us any minute. You had better smarten yourself up, Willie Pat, and put on your new serge suit. Tell Tessie . . . (*breaking off*). Why, you're taking no heed of me.

WILLIE PAT. I don't want to meet him.

MRS. MORAN (*surprised*). What's wrong with you? Why are you sitting there with your head drooped, and that sorrowful look on your face?

WILLIE PAT (*wearily*). Don't ask me, mother.

MRS. MORAN. Surely it isn't because your father is saying that the temperance crusade will ruin us?

WILLIE PAT. No, it is not. I cannot be ruined, for I'm ruined already.

MRS. MORAN. Heavens, Pat, what is it? You are in trouble; I can see it on your face. Tell me, lad.

WILLIE PAT (*lifting his head*). I cannot. . . .

MRS. MORAN (*bending over him tenderly*). Tell me, do. Now, Pat, don't be keeping the trouble to yourself. You'll feel easier in your mind when it's out.

WILLIE PAT. I don't want to tell, and . . . yet I must. (*A pause*). Mother, I am a thief!

MRS. MORAN (*agitatedly*). My God, it can't be true, it can't! You are wild, but you have not fallen to be a thief.

WILLIE PAT. I am; I stole money from the office . . .

MRS. MORAN (*utterly amazed and horror-stricken*). You stole money!

WILLIE PAT. I got into bad company. We betted and played cards . . . and I lost. (*He stops*.)

MRS. MORAN. Tell me everything. . . . Keep nothing back.

WILLIE PAT. I took some of the firm's money, intending to pay it back when I won. I lost it, and took more in the hope that I might be successful at the betting and win enough to pay all back. But the luck was dead against me; I was only going from bad to worse. Then one day I got some money to take to the bank. . . .

MRS. MORAN (*horrified*). And you stole that, too?

WILLIE PAT. No, but I met a chap who asked me in for a drink. It was a cold day, I was worried about the money I had taken. . . .

MRS. MORAN. You got drunk?

WILLIE PAT. When I awoke a few hours later I found myself lying on the roadside; the bag was beside me, but it was empty. I had lost the money, or it had been stolen from me. It was all found out, the gambling and the rest of it, so they sent me home.

MRS. MORAN. Oh, Pat, Pat! What have you done? 'Tis to prison they'll be sending you. Mother o' God, have pity on me! Pat, my boy!

WILLIE PAT. No, mother, they won't send me to prison if I refund the money; they will hush it up. Then I could go to America, and make a fresh start.

MRS. MORAN. And if you can't refund it?

WILLIE PAT. They will prosecute me. (*Breaks down.*)

MRS. MORAN. Come, calm yourself. How much did you take?

WILLIE PAT. £30 from the drawer desk, and a matter of £10 of a cheque I cashed in the manager's name. And there was £240 in the bag.

MRS. MORAN. Pay back £240! Where is it to come from? We have no money. Oh, Pat, Pat! What is to be done?

WILLIE PAT. Let me go to gaol. It is too good for me.

MRS. MORAN. No, not that, whatever happens. Let me think. What *can* we do? Your father will be raging wild.

WILLIE PAT. Mother, you must not tell him, you must not!

MRS. MORAN. He will have to know.

WILLIE PAT. Not to-day, anyway. Give me time to think, time to prepare for his anger. My head is spinning, and I can't think now. (To-morrow I'll be better able to meet him.)

MRS. MORAN (*all pity*). My poor boy, my poor boy! We must break it gently to him. It would be dangerous to let it out suddenly, so it would.

WILLIE PAT. Dangerous, mother?

MRS. MORAN. Yes, he's not as strong as he appears to be, and 'tis fretting morn, noon, and night he is. (*As WILLIE PAT is about to speak.*) Don't speak. All the talking in the world won't mend matters. It's thinking we must be of the best way out of it all. How long have you to consider?

WILLIE PAT. Until next week. If I can come to an arrangement to pay back the money by instalments it will be all right.

MRS. MORAN. Let us pray God it will; but where is the money to come from? Where can we lay our hands on a tenth part of it?

WILLIE PAT. Couldn't we arrange to pay a few pounds now and again?

MRS. MORAN. If. . . . (*She is interrupted by the sound of a motor horn outside. She hastens to window.*) Why, it's Tom! Have a look, Willie Pat, at the grand car he is in, a motor car, no less. (*A young priest enters back. Embracing him.*) Tom, my lad, welcome home, welcome.

FATHER TOM. It is good, mother, to see you again.

MRS. MORAN. Give me your blessing.

FATHER TOM (*giving it smilingly*). My blessing and my love, little mother. And, Willie Pat, have you nothing to say?

WILLIE PAT (*who has lurked in the background, comes forward and shakes hands*). I am glad to see you, Tom.

FATHER TOM (*surveying him*). You have grown into quite a man. So you are in business now, and making great progress, I expect. (*WILLIE PAT winces.*)

MRS. MORAN (*hastily, to cover WILLIE PAT's confusion*). He's doing his best, poor boy, to help us along.

FATHER TOM (*cheerfully*). That's right. And how is father, that madcap Tessie, and all the youngsters?

MRS. MORAN. Fair, thanks be to God. The girls are at school, save Tessie. She has a day off. But we thought that it is forgetting us you would be now that you are so high and mighty, a second Father Mathew, they do be saying.

FATHER TOM. Well, mother, I feel it is the work I'm called for, to free Ireland from the slavery of intoxicating drink. But we won't talk of that now; I get too much of it in the pulpit and on the platform. I want to hear all the home news.

MRS. MORAN. There is not a big deal to tell, at least. . . . (*recollecting herself*). Willie Pat, go over to the forge and tell himself that Tom is here.

FATHER TOM. Do they still have the old sittings at the forge?

MRS. MORAN. Parliament isn't in it with them, and maybe you'd hear more foolish speeches there—if we can believe what the newspapers print. (*Exit WILLIE PAT.*)

FATHER TOM. Well, mother, what were you going to say?

MRS. MORAN. You know what himself said in the letter?

FATHER TOM. It caused me a lot of trouble. He wrote as if my temperance crusade were doing him a personal injury.

MRS. MORAN (*glancing out of window*). Yeh, if I haven't cleap forgot that you had a motor car driver with you. I must call him in, and give him a bite to eat (*is going*).

FATHER TOM. Don't worry, he's not there. He has gone on to the garage.

MRS. MORAN. But the luggage? Has he taken it?

FATHER TOM. The luggage? Oh, he is leaving that at the National Hotel. I wired them for rooms.

MRS. MORAN (*offended*). Wired for rooms at a stranger's, and you passing your own parents' door? No, Tom, 'twill be a sad day when you can't sleep under *their* roof.

FATHER TOM. There, mother, don't look so hurt. Judging by the tone of father's letter, I thought he might not care to have me.

MRS. MORAN. You wrong him, Tom; he is not that sort. He has a hasty teimper, but he soon calms down.

FATHER TOM. But, even so, perhaps I had better stay at the hotel.

MRS. MORAN. No, you stay here. While we have a roof to shelter us, you musn't pass us by. But, Tom, it wouldn't go against your crusade, would it, just to have you stopping here one night?

FATHER TOM. No, I think not. People understand these things. I'll get my bag sent back from the hotel.

MRS. MORAN. Do; it will be a comfort to have you

with us for one night, lad. Maybe 'tis under the sod I'll be before (*puts her apron to her eyes*).

FATHER TOM. Don't cry, little mother. I know you must feel lonely; I often feel it too, but my work must be done, the work that God has given me to do.

MRS. MORAN. I always knew He had some design for you. 'Tis often, when I'd see you that attentive serving Mass and studying so hard at your books, I'd be saying over in my own mind: "Maybe, 'tis a priest of God my little boy will be one day." And, sure, wasn't I right? God has been very good to an old woman. Wasn't my heart fit to burst with joy when I first saw you at the altar, looking so splendid in your fine vestments, and the little surpliced boys around you, and you chanting the holy words. . . .

FATHER TOM (*kissing her tenderly*). You foolish mother, I'm only one of many; and but for you I wouldn't be. You first turned my thoughts to the priesthood.

MRS. MORAN. Maybe so. But when you first went to Maynooth, 'tis many the bitter tears I shed, for in giving you to God I left myself the poorer.

FATHER TOM. No, no, don't say that.

MRS. MORAN (*thoughtfully*). Sure, it's a way the mothers have to be wishing the sons to do great things, and then to be crying when they leave us to do them.

(*Enter WILLIE PAT.*)

WILLIE PAT. Himself is coming. They were having it fierce and hot at the forge.

MRS. MORAN. Arguing about politics, I suppose, as usual.

WILLIE PAT (*thoughtlessly*). No, they were saying that Tom would close every licensed house in the town. And. . . .

FATHER TOM (*pained*). Willie Pat, you know I have no such intention.

WILLIE PAT. That's what father said, too ; but the blacksmith made out that the result would be the same. He said if they took the pledge like they took it in the other towns you visited that many of the publicans would be ruined. And if. . . .

MRS. MORAN (*hastily*). That will do, Willie Pat. Don't be making your brother uncomfortable, and this his only day with us for over two years.

WILLIE PAT. I didn't mean any harm.

FATHER TOM. Of course you didn't, Pat. Don't trouble about it.

MRS. MORAN. 'Tis only his thoughtlessness, the way that all young people be. Their words fly ahead of their thoughts.

WILLIE PAT. If I imagined. . . .

FATHER TOM. Not another word. You did not mean anything. Pat, go over to the National Hotel and bring my hand-bag here. Tell them that I am staying at home to-night.

MRS. MORAN. Deliver your message correctly, Pat.

WILLIE PAT. Oh, never fear, I will. (*Goes-out.*)

FATHER TOM. He doesn't seem to have improved much. He's bigger and more like a man, but there is a change in his manner, as if he were worried by some inward grief. Is he still inclined to be wild, mother ?

MRS. MORAN (*earnestly*). He is, God help us.

FATHER TOM. That sigh comes from your heart. Mother, look after Pat. He is my only brother, and if anything went wrong with him it would nearly kill me. Try and keep him straight. He alone will be left to carry on the family name ; and I want him to be a credit to it. -

MRS. MORAN. He has his own future to make.

FATHER TOM. No, we can all help to make it, father and you most of all, for I can see him but seldom.

Enter STEVE MORAN. He advances awkwardly and his son rises to greet him. They shake hands rather nervously.

FATHER TOM. And how are you, father?

STEVE. Middling. No use, anyway, in complaining.
He sits down moodily. It is evident that the discussion at the forge has not improved his temper.

MRS. MORAN. Of course not.

FATHER TOM. How are they all at the village parliament?

MRS. MORAN (*as her husband takes no notice*). He means the forge.

FATHER TOM (*trying to cover up awkward gap in conversation*). Ah, what stirring debates we used to have there in the old days. Many of the debaters—God be merciful to them—are now taking their last long rest.

MRS. MORAN. Ay, many a one. May the clay rest lightly upon them.

FATHER TOM. I remember before coming home. . . .

STEVE (*lifting his head and looking at him fixedly*). I wish you had never come home.

MRS. MORAN. Steve! Steve!

STEVE. And why wouldn't I talk to my own son, even if he is a big man now and ashamed of the parents who bred and reared him?

FATHER TOM. Father, you wrong me; you wrong me deeply.

MRS. MORAN. Yeh, listen to reason. Them fellahs at the forge have been rising you again, putting quare notions into your head, so they have.

FATHER TOM. Father, we must thresh this matter out. You feel bitter against me, though I hardly know why.

STEVE. Why, is it? And shouldn't I feel bitter to have you come here and help to ruin me, to take the

bread out of the mouths of your young sisters and your brother? Haven't I cause to be bitter?

FATHER TOM. I have no wish to injure any people—my own least of all. I only want to help them.

STEVE. And nice help you're giving us. You know what has happened throughout every part of Ireland you preached your damned temperance crusade in. Publican after publican has been ruined; businesses that it has taken years to build up have been destroyed in a few weeks. Now it seems that your own father is to be the next victim. Yes, you are the man who wants to help people—help them to the workhouse.

FATHER TOM. Listen to me, father. I am not to be blamed. As a boy I used always hear you talking about Ireland, of how we should all try to help her, how to raise her to the proud position that should be hers. Your teachings took root in my heart; and many a night I watered my pillow with tears because I was only a boy and powerless to aid the land I loved. You remember the old Fenian stories you used to tell us around the fire at night, and the rusty pikes you kept under the thatch?

STEVE. Well, and what of it?

FATHER TOM. When I went to college and became a priest, the old trouble was with me. I could do nothing for Ireland. One day an idea awoke in my mind. I saw the misery that abuse of drink gave rise to among our people, of the unspeakable squalor many were living in because of its baneful effects. I started the temperance crusade. At last, I told myself, I can do something to aid poor Granuaile—not with the pike or the gun, for my weapons had to be those of my Divine Master, the weapons of peace. The movement spread; thousands of my fellow-countrymen awoke to new life and prosperity, and the prosperity of the individual is the betterment of the race. I

STEVE (*impatiently*). What is the use of telling me all this?

MRS. MORAN. Can't you listen to the lad?

FATHER TOM. At that time you were comfortably settled on the farm; but when you lost it and took up the business that uncle left you, my heart grew heavy. I foresaw trouble.

STEVE. And very glad I was to get the business; it saved us from starvation. But when you knew how matters were with us, why did you bring the crusade here?

FATHER TOM. I could not help it. The campaign was planned out six months ahead.

MRS. MORAN. And we have been in the business only five.

FATHER TOM. I had to carry out the plan of my superiors. I could not refuse to visit Iniscurragh. The enemies of the cause were watching and saying to themselves: "He will be afraid to visit his native town, lest he injure his people's business." My hand was on the plough, and I could not turn back.

STEVE. Oh, you can colour the story all right. But see what your coming means to us—ruin.

FATHER TOM. But, my God! What could I do? Do you think it gives me any pleasure to come here?

STEVE. And was your temperance crusade more to you than the happiness of your own?

FATHER TOM. But I knew you had a little money laid by. The few hundreds left out of the break up of the farm.

STEVE. You did, did you? We haven't; not a penny.

FATHER TOM. Good Heavens, father!

STEVE. I'm as poor as any beggar going the road, save for what the business brings me in—just enough to keep us going.

FATHER TOM. But the farm money. What became of it?

MRS. MORAN. He was enticed into putting it into one of those companies, and he lost it all.

FATHER TOM (*troubled*). I did not know that. Why did you not tell me?

MRS. MORAN. 'Tis only lately we learnt it.

FATHER TOM. This is terrible.

STEVE. I am a ruined man—or near to it; and you have come to finish the work (*rising*). Yes, Tom Moran, you should be proud, proud to help to bring black sorrow and trouble to your own.

FATHER TOM. Father!

STEVE. I want none o' your smooth talk. It won't mend matters.

FATHER TOM. Father, I would give twenty years of my life to be able to avoid injuring you.

STEVE. There is but one thing you can do if you wish to save us.

FATHER TOM. One thing?

STEVE. Yes, you must give over your crusade here.

FATHER TOM. I could not do that. I could not.

STEVE. You *must*.

FATHER TOM. Don't ask me. It would mean my ruin.

STEVE. You have no one depending on you, I have.

FATHER TOM. I would not care for the ruin of my own career, but it would mean the collapse of the great movement I have built up during the past two years.

MRS. MORAN. Would you put the movement before us?

FATHER TOM. It's not that alone. Those who are supporting me would be thrown to the wolves; their work would be undone. And, God! how the men who oppose us would laugh. I would rather die than desert the men and women who have so unselfishly followed me, who have sacrificed so much to help me, who have devoted their best energies to the cause. I led them on,

and I cannot turn back. I cannot (*with emotion*) desert them.

STEVE. Have it, then. Desert your own and throw them to the wolves; let them feed on your own flesh and blood; there is no future for us; I am past my best working days; there is nothing I can turn my hand to. Tom Moran, if the stranger is more to you than we are, leave us to the wolves; leave your young sisters to grow up ragged and hungry. Yes, and leave Tessie take . . . to the streets. . . . There is nothing else for her.

MRS. MORAN (*horrified*). Steve! What are you saying?

FATHER TOM. Father, what words have you said? You do not know what they mean.

STEVE. I do well. How are we to exist without the business. The brewery have a hold on me, and if their trade in the town is damaged, they'll revenge themselves on me because I am your father. I got the hint.

MRS. MORAN. My boy, we wouldn't press you but for the girls, your little sisters. Who is to look after them when we are gone, and, 'tish't for ever we can be living? Now, if we were able to give them a fair education they might be able to do something for themselves later on.

FATHER TOM. Mother, every penny I have shall be theirs—and yours.

STEVE. And what have you to give?

FATHER TOM. I could manage to save a few pounds. But you know I *have* bound myself to poverty; all I have is God's. I take no money save for my bare travelling and living expenses.

STEVE (*sarcastically*). A strong support you'd be for the childer', wouldn't you?

FATHER TOM. My God, what can I do?

MRS. MORAN. Couldn't you let on you were unwell, and couldn't preach here?

FATHER TOM (*indignantly*). Mother, you don't know what you are saying. Even were I base enough to do it, the subterfuge would not succeed. The eyes of the opponents of temperance are watching my every action, and seeking to pick holes in my character and my work. But, Heavens, what can I do?

MRS. MORAN. Do as your father asks. We want every penny we can get now. We must refund Pat's. . . . (*Breaks off as she recollects herself.*)

FATHER TOM (*wonderingly*). Pat's? I don't understand.

MRS. MORAN. Just a slip of the tongue. I don't rightly know what I'm saying.

STEVE (*in a calmer tone*). Do, Tom. I am weary of struggles. Having to leave the farm nearly broke my heart; and then for months, when we first came to the house, business was bad. I struggled against it, worked it up, and now we can manage to pay our way. 'Twas a hard fight for a man broken in health and spirits, but for the family's sake I kept on.

MRS. MORAN. Yes, when it was in your bed you should have been, so the doctor said.

STEVE. Well, I didn't mind that; I couldn't leave ye to starve.

MRS. MORAN. Nor can Tom. Say you'll do what he wants, lad? Remember how we always did our best for you, stinted and pinched ourselves to give you the books and the learning. We reared you hard, but we knew how good you were, and how you wouldn't forget it. (*He sits on chair, his head bowed thoughtfully on his hands.*) (*Pleadingly*). Do, Tom, though I know it will go sore with you to give up your grand schemes for Ireland; but I have the first claim on you, the first child of my flesh and blood. (*She kneels at his feet, and puts her hands up to his.* STEVE comes over and lays one hand upon his shoulder in mute appeal.) Do, for my sake.

STEVE. Do, lad, for the sake of your little sisters.

Silence, during which an awful struggle is going on in FATHER TOM's mind. At length he removes his hands from his face, and looks up at them despairingly.

FATHER TOM (*brokenly*). I—I . . . cannot. . . .
(*They draw back, the mother sorrowfully, the father angrily.*)
I cannot, God in Heaven pity me! (*He rises to his feet.*)
Others trust in me; I cannot fail them.

STEVE (*angrily*). The "others" is your whole cry. The people who bred and reared you have no claim upon you; they deserve no consideration, no pity. Your concern is all for the "others"—the people you have more love for than your own flesh and blood! This is the return we get for rearing and pampering you, and making a fine gentleman of you. Now, you can look down upon us with contempt. Oh, Kate Moran, wasn't it a sorrowful day he was born to us?

MRS. MORAN. Hush, man, 'tis the way he can't see things as we do.

STEVE. No; he looks at everything from his own point of view. He is wrapped up in himself and his schemes, and puts them before us, while we, more fools we were, put him before everything. Yes, and we wronged Pat to do it, sending him out to earn his bread and he a gorsoon, while we sent his brother to college—no less. 'Twas the big mistake we made, and the bitter wrong we did Pat. Ay, and we're suffering for it now.

FATHER TOM. I believe. . . .

STEVE (*sternly*). Enough! We want none o' your preaching. Keep it for those who have more need of it.

(*Enter PAT with bag; he places it on chair.*)

WILLIE PAT. I got the bag, but they were put out to say you wouldn't sleep at the hotel to-night. Will I take it upstairs?

MRS. MORAN. Yes, Willie Pat, to the front room.

STEVE (*as WILLIE PAT is obeying*). Stop! He will

never sleep under my roof. Never! As he prefers his grand followers he can go to them; I no longer call him a son of mine.

MRS. MORAN. You wouldn't drive him forth in anger, Steve, you wouldn't? And he our eldest son, and a holy priest of God. (*Coaxingly.*) Now, you'll let him stay; and 'tis quieter we'll be to talk it all over in the morning? Say you will?

FATHER TOM. I'm going, mother. I should only be bringing fresh trouble if I stayed.

MRS. MORAN (*crying*). Don't be too hard on him, Steve. Can't you see he's suffering?

STEVE. And we must suffer the most. You can go to your grand followers, and make speeches to them, and have them present addresses to you, and be called the saviour of Ireland. But I know what to call you. (*Is overcome with emotion.*)

FATHER TOM. I am going, father.

STEVE. And the sooner the better. Pat, take back that bag to wherever you brought it from. (*Goes over and flings the side-door wide open.*) There, Tom Moran, is the wide road before you, and my prayer to God is that our paths may never cross again in this life. (FATHER TOM makes a motion as if to kiss his mother, but draws back; preceded by WILLIE PAT with the bag, he goes out, but pauses at threshold to give one look back at his mother. His father closes the door after him, returns to his wife, who is sitting crying on a chair by the table, and bends over her.) Kate! (*She gives no answer.*) Now, let him do his worst. He can fight for his followers and for his cause, but I'll fight for what is dearer to me—my own flesh and blood. Kate, do you hear me? It's going to be a fight to a finish. (*He brings down his fist heavily on table to emphasize his words. She makes no sign or motion.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

A room in the National Hotel. It is furnished after the usual manner of private rooms to be found in hotels in country towns, but on this occasion efforts have been made to give it a festive appearance. There is a large window at back with dark red hangings; the principal door is at the left-hand corner, and a smaller door is in the right-hand wall. A large table is in the centre; it is covered with books and documents, writing materials and newspapers. Time, three o'clock, p.m. MR. SHEEDY is sitting writing at table. Enter MIKE HAYES, dressed in holiday attire, and twirling a bowler hat rather sheepishly in his hand. He coughs nervously in order to attract the writer's attention.

SHEEDY (*looking up*). Ah, Mr. Hayes, I see.

MIKE. I'm afraid I'm too early for the celebrations, Mr. Sheedy?

SHEEDY. Quite so. But punctuality is a most desirable virtue, most desirable. (*Resumes writing.*)

MIKE. I like to give myself plenty of time. If ye go anywhere at the heel of the hunt everybody's eyes are perched up on ye. When I'm late for Mass I always drop on one knee in the outside porch, for all the world like one of them sharpshooters. If I stalked up the aisle the whole congregation would be. . . .

SHEEDY (*interrupting him impatiently*). Excuse me, Mr. Hayes, but I'm very busy. (*Writes.*)

MIKE *fidgets for a few moments, coughs again, and as SHEEDY takes no notice, walks over to table and watches him writing.*

MIKE. Did you do all that writing yourself? What a head you must have.

SHEEDY. Oh, it must be done. Father Tom and the others will soon be here, and I must have everything ready for them. Work, my dear Mr. Hayes, is most beneficial, good for the body and soul.

MIKE. H'm. Such a powerful lot of writing wouldn't do my soul much good. I'd have six curses said for every word I'd write. Long ago I used. . . .

SHEEDY (*taking up paper*). Pardon me, I must see the bandmaster.

MIKE (*as SHEEDY is going out*). Mr. Sheedy, wouldn't you try and induce him to play "The Irish Washer-woman" by way of a change? I'm sick of hearing "The Peeler and the Goat." Exit SHEEDY.

MIKE *is about to light his pipe when he recollects where he is. He shoves pipe back again in his pocket just as BARNEY DOYLE comes in.*

BARNEY (*surprised*). What, Mike!

MIKE. You look surprised.

BARNEY. Faith, I didn't think I'd see you here. You're not very keen on teetotalism.

MIKE. So I'm not, but on an occasion like this even the heathen and the publican are welcome. They won't throw me out. I have to read an address to Father Tom from the District Council.

BARNEY. You to read it?

MIKE. Someone had to, and only me and the chairman were able to pronounce correctly all the hard rockers o' words in it. It was betwixt and between us, so we tossed for it—the loser to spout—and I lost.

BARNEY. I don't envy you the job.

MIKE (*confidently*). Oh, I'll get through with it. There is nothing like Irish whiskey for giving a man Dutch courage. (*He pulls out a bottle and drinks.*) Who couldn't read an address after this? Have a swig?

BARNEY. And we going to attend a temperance meeting? I wouldn't dream of it (*taking bottle*). Keep an eye on the door. (*MIKE goes to door while BARNEY drinks.*) It's a great thing to have a little spirit (*looking at bottle*). I mean public spirit. Here we are—leaving our work and our business to greet our fellow-townsmen. Though he's against the drink we're proud of him, even if it were only to spite the Protestants. (*They both sit down.*)

MIKE. But they are for him, too. I heard that the rector, Mr. Roycroft, and old Mr. Hammon, the secretary of the Unionist League, are to be here. 'Tis a quare world.

BARNEY. What! I must have another drink after that. (*Takes bottle from MIKE and drinks.*) Have a peppermint lozenge? (*Producing a few out of a vest pocket.*) Just to keep our breaths from disturbing the meeting.

MIKE (*taking one and eating it*). Right-o! I brought a slice of onion, but the peppermint's more genteel. A lady might have a peppermint breath.

BARNEY. After all, Mike, do you think this temperance movement of Father Tom's is going to do any good?

MIKE. It might help to lower the price of drink. But don't you be troubling about them things; take the world sober and aisy—just as it comes. If anything goes wrong with it, we can get a question asked in the House of Parliament.

Enter TESSIE MORAN: she looks pleased to see them.

TESSIE. I came over to see Father Tom. I missed him last night, and you know he is my favourite brother.

MIKE. I have no doubt but you're his favourite sister, Miss Tessie. How could he help it?

BARNEY (*who has half-risen*). He's at luncheon, but he will be up shortly. Will any more of the family be here to-day?

TESSIE. I don't know ; they had words last night with Tom, and he left before I could see him.

BARNEY. I think, Miss Moran, that you had best wait in the hall. You will see him coming in, and you can have speech with him there.

TESSIE. Yes, I will. (*With girlish enthusiasm.*) All the girls at school are madly jealous of me because I am his sister. I can't tell you how happy I feel, how I boast of the work he is doing. The nuns are always speaking about it. I hope it isn't wrong to feel conceited, Mr. Hayes, for I do.

MIKE. Not when we're conceited ourselves. It's wrong in other people because they should have nothing to be conceited about. That's how it strikes me.

TESSIE. And, guess, I'm going to recite a poem at the Temperance Hall afterwards. The nuns persuaded me this morning. But I hear someone. I must be off. (*Goes out gaily.*)

MIKE. Bless the girl and all of 'em. When I see them I can't help wondering if two old bachelors like you and me, Barney, have the best of it.

BARNEY. We have no one to bother us, anyway.

MIKE. I don't know that I'd mind being bothered, if it was done in a nice sort of way. And it is fine to have company after. . . .

BARNEY. Oh, give me a rest. You talk enough to be company for yourself. (*Takes cards out of his pocket.*)

MIKE. Where are you going with the cards, man? Put them up.

BARNEY. I was thinking we might have a game of forty-five while we are waiting. I never can see a table but I want to slap down the cards on it.

MIKE. Don't be foolish. (*Disappointed, BARNEY restores the cards.*) The bottle's empty, and my speech-making courage has oozed out. Come and have one.

BARNEY. Yes, we'll go and drink success to Father Tom.

Exeunt by side door as SHEEDY, followed by the REV. MR. ROYCROFT and ARCHIBALD HAMMON, enter through the other.

SHEEDY. This way, Mr. Roycroft. Take a seat, gentlemen.

ROYCROFT. Have we long to wait?

SHEEDY. But a few minutes, and the presentation of addresses will not take long. In fact, the proceedings here will be more or less private; only a few will be admitted. At the close Father Moran will address the crowd from the window, and afterwards head the procession to the Temperance Hall, where he will deliver the first lecture of the crusade.

HAMMON. I see you have it well organized.

SHEEDY. Quite so, Mr. Hammon. Now, I must see after some of the details. *(Goes out with a bundle of documents under his arm. The others seat themselves.)*

ROYCROFT. I say, Hammon, I don't feel at all easy at being here to-day. You know if a clergyman of my persuasion attends a Papist gathering it often adversely affects the parochial subscriptions. Such a list is a sort of clerical barometer by which I can tell how I stand with my parishioners; hitherto it has been at "Fair," and I don't want it to drop. Last year one of my richest parishioners refused his subscription because he heard my little boy whistling "The Wearing of the Green."

HAMMON. Oh, Roycroft, we mustn't be bigoted.

ROYCROFT. Of course not; but we must be very, very careful. And who knows but this temperance movement may be a new dodge of the Jesuits. I always distrust these Papist gatherings.

HAMMON. I shouldn't worry, if I were you. I only hope that the band won't play any of those confounded rebelly tunes.

ROYCROFT. It is to be hoped not. We are taking a risk by coming here; but I think there is no occasion

for any great anxiety. By the way, Hammon, what do you think of the crusade? Is it likely to be a success?

HAMMON. Undoubtedly. But for that belief I wouldn't be here. Why, this clergyman is sweeping the country before him.

ROYCROFT. Really, it is a marvellous thing for a common man to do, one of the lower orders; and I am sure that, after all, we may satisfy our consciences that we are doing the right thing in supporting this campaign. Of course, it means mixing with our social inferiors, but. . . .

HAMMON. We must be charitable.

ROYCROFT. Very true. Your remarks are always to the point.

Enter CANON KELLY, P.P. He advances and shakes hands with REV. MR. ROYCROFT and MR. HAMMON.

CANON KELLY. Delighted to see you here to-day, Mr. Roycroft. And you, Mr. Hammon. I am delighted beyond measure.

ROYCROFT. Well, on an occasion like this we can sink our little differences and come together for the public good. There is nothing of a political or compromising nature in such a gathering.

HAMMON. Certainly not.

CANON KELLY. I think we should get on very well together if the Sassenach left us to fight out our differences between ourselves. We don't always get on between ourselves, but we get on better than we would with anyone else.

HAMMON (*uneasy*). But this gathering, Canon, you said was to be strictly non-political.

CANON KELLY. Pardon me, I didn't mean my remarks to be looked upon in that light. We won't argue politics to-day.

ROYCROFT. I agree with you; there is more beneficial work before us.

HAMMON. Undoubtedly. The lower classes spend far too much on drink; and it does them an immense amount of harm. Father Moran, having relatives in the licensed trade, will understand the situation thoroughly.

CANON KELLY. Ahem. The fact is one which we wish to ignore. He cannot be blamed for his people's occupation, but it is a lever which those opposed to the temperance movement are trying to make much of.

ROYCROFT. But I presume that Father Moran is a man of strong character, and will not give way.

CANON KELLY. No; he is as firm as a rock. His enemies were eagerly watching to see if he would avoid preaching in his native town, and thus risk ruining his parents' business, but he would not fail the cause. He is a magnificent character, a born leader, and a born fighter, and nothing can turn him back from what he considers his duty. If I mistake not he is coming now. *(They turn expectantly to the door, but only SHEEDY enters.)* Mr. Sheedy, has Father Tom finished luncheon? *(Cheering outside.)*

SHEEDY. He is coming almost immediately. The crowd saw him in the hall and started cheering.

CANON KELLY. Prevent people from coming into the room unless they have business here. If one got in they would all want to, and we should be suffocated and crushed.

SHEEDY. Quite so, Canon. I'll take care it doesn't happen.

HAMMON *(pulling SHEEDY aside)*. I say, Sheedy, I hope the band won't play any of those confounded rebelly tunes?

SHEEDY. No, sir, nothing whatever of a political nature.

HAMMON. I'm pleased to hear that. As an ex-District Inspector of Police, I should feel called upon to protest if they did. Are you sure of this?

SHEEDY. Quite certain, for the band can play only one

tune, and that, I hear—for I have no ear for music myself—has some reference to a goat.

HAMMON (*much relieved*). Oh, then, that is all right. My mind is at rest. (*Goes over to REV. MR. ROYCROFT and says in an aside.*) No need to worry. The band can play only one tune, evidently some pastoral ballad.

FATHER TOM *enters followed by MIKE HAYES, BARNEY DOYLE, and a REPORTER. SHEEDY carefully closes the door after them.*

FATHER TOM (*advancing and shaking hands with the REV. MR. ROYCROFT and ARCHIBALD HAMMON*). Gentlemen, I am pleased to see you with us. This is, indeed, a happy augury for the success of the campaign.

ROYCROFT. I earnestly hope so. I regret so few men of prominence are here present.

FATHER TOM. Oh, that can't be helped. They will fall in line with us later.

Others are engaged with papers at table.

HAMMON. I believe the Licensed Vintners' Society made a strong canvass against . . . (REV. MR. ROYCROFT *gives him a warning dig in the ribs.*) Ah, yes. (*Coughs to cover his confusion.*) Undoubtedly.

FATHER TOM. We have right and justice on our side, the biggest assets we could have.

CANON KELLY (*coming over to them*). We have, and more. We have every man who has the welfare of his country at heart behind us. And we are going to win.

FATHER TOM. There can be no doubt as to the result. We are gaining steadily day by day. But I see that Mr. Sheedy is impatient for us to begin.

They settle themselves round table, FATHER TOM at the head. The REPORTER takes out notebook and pencil.

CANON KELLY (*rising to his feet ceremoniously*). Gentlemen, we are assembled here to-day to perform a very agreeable duty, to present our distinguished fellow-townsmen—Father Thomas Moran—with addresses

indicative of the high esteem in which he is held in his native city, and in grateful appreciation of the noble work he has done for the cause of temperance. (*Hear, hear.*) It is unnecessary for me to enter into details of the crusade which he is starting here to-day; he will explain that better to you than I possibly could; but we are already aware of the wonderful results he has achieved in the different parts of Ireland he has visited. North, east, west, and south, have awakened to his call, and have flocked to his standard, filled with a holy zeal to free men from the body and soul destroying evils of intemperance. Countless homes have been made brighter, countless poor victims rescued from sin and degradation. For these abundant blessings we thank God and the gifted preacher whom He has made the instrument of His Divine Will. We are proud of Father Tom—to call him by the name we love—and we trust we shall be prouder still of him; we know it.

SHEEDY. No doubt of it. (*Hear, hear.*)

CANON KELLY. May he be long spared to help to make Ireland. . . .

MIKE (*interrupting*). "Great, glorious and free,
First flower of the earth and. . ."

BARNEY DOYLE *puts his hand over his mouth and stops him.*

CANON KELLY (*annoyed, but recovering*). A happy, a prosperous, and a sober nation. (*Great applause.*) Perhaps some other gentleman would have a word to say. (*He sits down, and the REV. MR. ROYCROFT gets slowly to his feet.*)

ROYCROFT. I am delighted, gentlemen, to be able to join my voice in rendering well-deserved honour to one who has conferred such renown on his birthplace, and one who has done such splendid work for the regeneration of our beloved land. Every year we pay an enormous drink bill, the exact amount of which I now forget. . . .

SHEEDY. Thirteen millions.

ROYCROFT. Thank you, Mr. Sheedy. A sum which we can ill afford, and which might be expended in more profitable directions—in giving the younger generation a better training—in providing better houses for the working classes, and in founding village libraries and so forth. (*Hear, hear.*) However much we may differ in other matters, the temperance platform is one on which we can all meet and work unitedly and wholeheartedly. On behalf of the denomination which Mr. Hammon and myself represent, we extend to Father Moran a cordial welcome, and wish him every success in the laudable work he has undertaken. (*Amid loud applause he gives way to HAMMON.*)

HAMMON. I heartily endorse all that Mr. Roycroft has so ably said. In my late official capacity I came in contact with many appalling cases of crime that were directly due to drink. In fact, if the drink evil was eradicated, half the magistrates might take a holiday. As I'm not much of a hand at making a speech I'll leave it at that.

MIKE (*as the speaker sits down*). And you're the gentleman that can make one. The time you had the boys up for. . . .

CANON KELLY (*hastily*). Ahem, Mr. Hayes, I think we are too busy to go into these matters now.

SHEEDY. Quite so. This is hardly the appropriate place.

BARNEY. True for you, Mr. Sheedy.

There is a burst of applause as FATHER TOM rises to his feet.

FATHER TOM. My friends, I do not know how to thank you for the warmth of your welcome, and for the kind sentiments you have expressed. It is pleasant to have such compensations for the inevitable feelings of failure that strike me when things go wrong. But we

must not be pessimistic ; the cause is gaining fresh strength and vigour every day, and the opposition is weakening. The temperance movement is making greater progress than I ever anticipated ; and it is due largely to the indefatigable efforts of the men and women who have so unselfishly given their time to the noble work. We have them in all classes of society, labouring day after day to bring home the great truth to the nation, the truth that the abuse of intoxicating drink is a cancer eating into its vitals. But, we shall get rid of that cancer, cut it out from the roots ; and every man or woman who takes the pledge, or who induces another to take it, is a surgeon wielding the knife that is to save Ireland. (*Hear, hear.*) It will take some time—for Rome was not built in a day—but any work bravely undertaken, and with God's blessing on it, will succeed, however hard the struggles, however zealous the enemies of the cause may be, however strong their mistaken advocacy.

MIKE. They're trying to drive you from the town.

CANON KELLY. Hush ! (*Lifts up his hands warningly.*)

FATHER TOM. And, my friends, we are mistaken by many, many who think we are striving to bring about the ruin of a big industry. But we wish to injure no man ; we want to uplift and bring fresh life to the nation, to pour prosperity into the dens of the cities, where now the most of the worker's weekly wage goes to poison rather than nourish him. We want to rescue the half-starved children of the drunkard, and lead them to a purer and cleaner life. We want to raise the drunkard to a higher life, a nobler train of thought, to make him recognize the mercy and goodness of Him in whose image he was created. Here is work for everyone, work close to hand. Everyone can become a nation-builder, a worker to raise the Ireland of our dreams from the poor and poverty-stricken land we see to-day. (*Hear, hear.*)

The temperance movement will be a powerful lever to help the re-building, and we are going to make it the strongest. . . .

MIKE. You'll do it, Father Tom.

FATHER TOM. No, no, Mr. Hayes, but with the aid of my faithful friends and supporters, I shall *help* to do it. And I tell them not to be disheartened, for we intend to triumph. The tide is with us, and we are speeding onwards to victory. (*Applause.*) So, let us be of good cheer, and fight the good fight that leads to the goal of our ambition, a sober and a prosperous Ireland, an Ireland fit to take her place in the ranks of nationhood, to which position the temperance movement will help her to rise ; and which cause—as long as God gives me health and strength—I will never forsake.

Loud and continued applause ; some of them rise and shake him vigorously by the hand.

BARNEY. I never doubted you, Father Tom.

There is a knock at door which SHEEDY goes to answer ; there is an altercation.

SHEEDY. I can't leave you in.

CANON KELLY. Who is it ?

SHEEDY. Thade Mulligan, your reverence, a notorious character, . . . a . . . a drunkard.

HAMMON. I know the fellow, a disgrace to the town.

FATHER TOM. What does he want ?

SHEEDY. To speak to you, Father Moran.

CANON KELLY. We can't have him here. Get on with the business.

FATHER TOM. One moment. He was an old school-mate of mine. Perhaps he is not gone beyond saving.

CANON KELLY. I am afraid he is ; he has ruined his family.

SHEEDY opens door and admits a man, ragged and unkempt-looking to the last degree. He rushes to FATHER TOM.

MULLIGAN. Oh, Father. . . .

FATHER TOM. Well, my poor fellow?

MULLIGAN. I want to begin afresh. I've lost everything—home . . . children . . . all through the drink. I thought, maybe, 'tis you'd help me to begin over agin.

FATHER TOM. Are you firmly resolved to change your life?

MULLIGAN. S'help me God, I am. I don't want the drink, but it has a grip of me. I can't shake it off. Bless me, an' maybe the longing will go out of me.

FATHER TOM. Then repeat after me (THADE MULLIGAN *kneels down and repeats words*): I promise, that from this day forward, for my whole life, to faithfully abstain from all intoxicating drink, and may God help me to keep my promise.

MULLIGAN (*rising*). I'll try to keep it, Father.

HAMMON (*to CANON KELLY*). This fellow was with me until I had to sack him owing to the drink.

FATHER TOM (*who has heard the remark*). Well, Mr. Hammon, you will take him back again, won't you? Are you working now, Mulligan?

MULLIGAN. Sorra a stroke* have I done for four months. 'Tis the charity of the neighbours that's keeping the spark o' life in the children.

HAMMON. As you ask me, Father Moran, I'll give him another chance—one more.

MULLIGAN. Thank you, sor.

FATHER TOM. Now, go. Remember your promise. (*Shakes hands with him. SHEEDY shows him out; then returns and picks up papers on table.*)

SHEEDY. I will now read the address from the Iniscurragh Temperance League. (*Clears his throat and reads.*)

“To the REV. T. MORAN.

“REV. FATHER—On this, the occasion of your first visit to your native town since the start of your great

temperance crusade, we, the members of the above Society, avail of the opportunity to express our admiration of the glorious work you are doing for the cause of temperance, a work which must be fruitful with blessings for humanity. We hail you as the successor of Father Mathew, the preacher on whom his mantle has fallen, and who wears it worthily. We look to you to spread everywhere his teaching and his principles; and to help to make our land once more 'The Isle of Saints and Scholars.' We are proud of the fact that you are our fellow-townsmen, for it more closely unites us to the cause which it is our heartfelt prayer you may be long spared to direct and guide.

"We remain, Reverend Father,

"Yours faithfully,

"REV. CANON KELLY, *President.*

"EDWARD SHEEDY, *Hon. Sec.*"

SHEEDY finishes amid applause; some hand-clapping.

MIKE. Faith, it's short and sweet.

SHEEDY. Mr. Hayes, of the District Council, and Mr. Doyle, representing the Town Tenants' League, will now present addresses on behalf of these public bodies. Now, Mr. Hayes.

As SHEEDY sits down, MIKE HAYES rises and produces a sheaf of papers which he fumbles with.

MIKE (to REPORTER). Mr. Michael Hayes, Vice-Chairman of the District Council. (*Straightens himself to read, but again bends to REPORTER, as if in after-thought.*) And don't forget to give me the V.C.—Vice-Chairman.

CANON KELLY. That appears to be a very long address, Mr. Hayes.

HAMMON. I should think so.

MIKE. There are only six sheets of it.

HAMMON. Oh, Lord!

CANON KELLY. As our time is limited, would it not be possible to cut it short?

SHEEDY. Quite so, Mr. Hayes can hand it to the reporter, who will get it published in full.

REPORTER. Oh, yes, certainly. We'll print it verbatim.

MIKE. Very well, then. But don't leave out any of the bits of poetry. But talking is dry work. I'll give ye the start and tail end of the address. (*Clears his throat and reads.*)

"To the REVEREND T. MORAN.

"From the Iniscurragh Rural District Council.

"DEAR REVEREND SIR—On behalf of the. . . ."

A loud knock at the door causes him to stop. SHEEDY goes to it. MRS. MORAN, STEVE, and WILLIE PAT appear in the opening. They say something to SHEEDY.

CANON KELLY. Wait a second, Mr. Hayes.

SHEEDY (*coming back*). Father Moran's people wish to speak to him on urgent business.

FATHER TOM. But I cannot. . . just now.

STEVE (*advancing cap in hand*). We won't keep you long. And it's most important, else we wouldn't have come to disturb the meeting.

CANON KELLY. Perhaps there is a private room where they could have the interview. See, Mr. Sheedy.

(*Exit SHEEDY.*)

STEVE. I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for this intrusion.

FATHER TOM. Well, father, as the matter is urgent. . . .

(*Enter SHEEDY.*)

SHEEDY. I regret to say there is no room available. The whole hotel is overrun with people just now. There are numbers of them come in from the country.

FATHER TOM. Under the circumstances, gentlemen, if you would be kind enough to retire to the corridor for a short while, I should be much obliged.

HAMMON. Oh, of course ; why not ?

MIKE (*to Barney*). Come and have *one* while we're waiting.

Exeunt all. FATHER TOM *looks at his people questioningly.*

FATHER TOM. Well, what is it ?

STEVE. The matter we were talking of yesterday.

FATHER TOM (*with a gesture of impatience*). What's the use ? There is no sense in reviving such a discussion. Absolutely none. My work is planned out, and I must go ahead with it. You can do no good by coming here ; and you know how it distresses me.

STEVE. God knows it's little pleasure we find in coming.

MRS. MORAN. Tom, my son, don't be harsh with us. 'Tisn't for ourselves we want you to give over the temperance business, but for the sake of the childer.

FATHER TOM. I know, I know. You said all that yesterday ; and no one can tell how hard a struggle it was to refuse your request (*is moved*). Ask me anything but that.

MRS. MORAN. Oh, Tom, Tom, how can you ? And it the only favour we ever asked of you. This morn your father got word that the worst would happen if you went ahead with this crusade.

STEVE. Do, lad.

FATHER TOM. I cannot (*passionately*). You know I cannot. I would not mind the ruin of my own career — of the scorn that men would heap upon me, but I cannot desert the men whom I have led into the movement. I cannot desert them.

STEVE. No, maybe you'll prefer to desert your own. Pat, come here.

WILLIE PAT *comes forward very reluctantly, but his father forces him almost roughly.*

WILLIE PAT. Oh, father, don't, don't tell him !

MRS. MORAN. Don't take on, Pat, it's for the best.

FATHER TOM (*puzzled*). What is it? Don't keep me in suspense.

WILLIE PAT. I—I. . . (*breaks down*).

STEVE. It means that you must choose between the disgrace of your grand companions and the disgrace of your own name and family. If you had given in to us, you need never have known; now you must. Pat, tell what we brought you here for.

WILLIE PAT (*hesitates, shamefaced*). I—c—can't, father.

MRS. MORAN. Speak up! (WILLIE PAT *stammers and turns away*.)

STEVE (*sternly*). Go on!

WILLIE PAT (*falteringly*). Tom, I—I stole . . . money . . . (*breaks down*). I can't go on. It's—it's no, no good making me.

FATHER TOM. My God! Tell me; what has he done?

STEVE. He stole £30 from his employer's desk, and squandered it on betting and card-playing.

WILLIE PAT (*vehemently*). I meant to pay it back. I did, I did! I wasn't going to keep it. (FATHER TOM *is dumbfounded*.)

MRS. MORAN. And that's not all.

STEVE. I wish it were. In a drunken spree he lost—or it was robbed from him—a sum of £240 that he was taking to the bank. And he forged a cheque for £10 in the manager's name.

FATHER TOM (*horrified*). Great God! Pat, why did you do it? Pat! (He goes over and places his hand on WILLIE PAT, who lies huddled upon a chair.)

WILLIE PAT. Go away; don't touch me. (*Pushes his hand from him, and again buries his face between his hands*.)

MRS. MORAN. It's no use speaking to him. 'Tis distracted he is, and distracted we all are with this black trouble upon us.

STEVE. If he got his due 'tis in prison he'd be this very hour, but he can escape that if he manages to pay back the money within two years.

FATHER TOM. They are not prosecuting him?

STEVE. Not if he can refund the money. D'you hear me? (FATHER TOM *is beginning to understand the significance of the statement.*)

FATHER TOM (*at length, dully*). Yes.

STEVE. By saving and contriving I can manage to pay it back; I'll work my fingers to the bone to do it, but I won't be able to do it if my business is ruined, and the anger of the brewery brought down on me. There, that's how we are situated.

MRS. MORAN. And Pat's not strong. It isn't living long he'd be in prison.

FATHER TOM. Why wasn't I told of this yesterday?

STEVE. I would have, but I didn't know of it. 'Twas only half-an-hour ago herself summoned up courage to break it to me. Then I made for here as soon as my legs would carry me.

MRS. MORAN. To ask you to save the lad from imprisonment and the name of Moran from disgrace—a name that nobody ever could point the finger of scorn at.

STEVE. Tom, you can do it if you will. I will do my share; but all I could do would be useless unless you did your part. It's in your hands—the honour of the family and your brother's future. Are you going to save him—your only brother? (*pointing to the figure on chair*). If he goes to prison he'll have no guiding hand, maybe, when he comes out, for I may not be there. The doctors don't give me much hope of living more than a few years more. But I could go in peace if we had paid back the money he stole.

FATHER TOM (*as if to himself*). My God, a Moran a thief!

STEVE. If I knew he was free of the prison brand and

trying to better his life, 'tish't fearing death I'd be. No. You can give me that comfort, lad. . . .

MRS. MORAN. Will you, Tom? Why should you be thinking so much of the stranger, and they, maybe, not caring for you? And even if they did, who could love you as well as we do?

STEVE. They will make talk about you, but they can't unfrock you, so what can you be fearing?

WILLIE PAT (*piteously*). Oh, Tom, don't let them send me to prison! Don't!

MRS. MORAN. Will you, lad?

FATHER TOM (*at length*). I give in. The name of Moran must not be disgraced, save by me alone. But let the world think what it will (*turning to his brother tenderly*). Pat; they shall not send you to prison.

(*Cheering outside.*)

MRS. MORAN. Thank God, thank God!

WILLIE PAT (*rising and coming to his brother*). Oh, Tom, how good you are! How good you are to me! And I don't deserve it.

FATHER TOM. You must try to be.

STEVE. We'll give him a fresh start in America.

WILLIE PAT. Yes, yes; I'll go anywhere.

FATHER TOM. No, father, you must keep him at home. And now, Pat, promise me that you will never . . . do wrong again. Promise me, Pat, that you will lead an honest, manly life.

WILLIE PAT (*brokenly*). I promise . . . and you don't hate me, Tom . . . for . . . what I did?

FATHER TOM. No, I'll not judge you. But you must bring no more trouble upon your father.

MRS. MORAN. He won't, the poor boy. 'Tis led astray he was.

STEVE (*advancing and shaking FATHER TOM warmly by the hand*). I wronged you, Tom. Forget what I said when the anger was strong in me.

FATHER TOM. I have already forgotten. Don't let it come between us ; my own are all I have got *now*.

MRS. MORAN. God will reward you, lad. I knew you would not fail us in the end. (*Bending over she kisses him, then goes out with STEVE and WILLIE PAT, leaving FATHER TOM sitting at head of table.*)

A few seconds later the late occupants of the room—

CANON KELLY, ROYCROFT, HAMMON, MIKE, BARNEY, and SHEEDY—*file into it. They are chatting animatedly. MIKE is suggestively wiping his mouth with a handkerchief.*

CANON KELLY (*to* ROYCROFT). I never before saw such a large number of people in the town. Our campaign is starting under the happiest auspices.

ROYCROFT. There is certainly a terrific crowd outside.

MIKE. Such banners, Father Tom, and such crowds—the like was never seen here before.

BARNEY. I never saw anything like it in all my born days. If you dropped a pin 'twould fall on the head of some one.

CANON KELLY (*as there is the sound of commotion outside*). What is that, Mr. Sheedy ?

SHEEDY (*looking out window*). Only the marshals forming the crowd in processional order.

BARNEY. And look at the school children in their red sashes.

CANON KELLY. I hope they will let the children head the procession.

SHEEDY. Oh, the band first, your reverence.

CANON KELLY. I mean after the band. I think there is something very appealing, don't you, Mr. Roycroft, in the sight of little youngsters in procession ?

ROYCROFT. Oh, very.

HAMMON. Yes, in *non-political* processions.

CANON KELLY. Well, we must not keep the procession waiting too long.

MIKE. Then, I'll be getting on with the address. (*In a loud whisper to the REPORTER.*) Don't forget to put the V.C. after my name. (*Reads.*)

"DEAR REVEREND SIR—On behalf. . . ."

FATHER TOM, *who has been motionless through all this, rises.*

FATHER TOM (*in a curiously dead tone of voice*). Stop ; you need not read the address.

CANON KELLY (*astonished*). What on earth, Father Tom, is your reason for saying that?

FATHER TOM. I am not preaching a temperance crusade in this town or anywhere else in future.

All except REPORTER spring to their feet in utter amazement, and stare at FATHER TOM. A brief silence is broken by the sound of falling chairs, overturned by their excited owners in their hasty rising.

CANON KELLY. Good God ! What is the meaning of this ?

ROYCROFT. It is extraordinary.

FATHER TOM. I may be accused of cowardice—I am certain I shall be—but I cannot help it. Circumstances are too strong for me.

CANON KELLY. But, my dear sir, do you realize what you are doing ? Are you losing your senses ? Upon my word, I believe you are.

SHEEDY. You cannot withdraw now, Father Moran.

FATHER TOM. *I am withdrawing.*

CANON KELLY. Good Heavens ! Do you intend to ruin the cause, and destroy all the work you have done ? Yes, and to destroy the work others have done in supporting you ? If you are—why ? There must be some reason for this extraordinary change of front.

HAMMON. An explanation is certainly due to us.

SOME (*together*). Yes, an explanation. (OTHERS *give audible murmurs of assent.*)

FATHER TOM. I have none to give. You need not ask.

CANON KELLY (*angrily*). Can I believe the evidence of my ears? Without a word of explanation you deliberately destroy a great movement—a movement that it has taken years to build up. You leave those who have devoted their time and energy to forwarding it, for the enemies of the cause to heap their ridicule upon. You desert—yes, desert them—at the eleventh hour, and leave them to be laughed at. What confounded nonsense is it? (*Silence.*) Are you afraid?

FATHER TOM. No.

SHEEDY. I can come to no other conclusion.

HAMMON. Nor can I.

ROYCROFT. We came here at considerable inconvenience to assist you, and this is how we are treated! Having flattered you with speeches, you turn around and deliberately pitch us to the dickens!

MIKE. 'Tis making fools of us he is.

FATHER TOM. You misjudge me, but I do not blame you. You cannot understand my motives—no man can. My withdrawal from. . . .

CANON KELLY. Desertion.

FATHER TOM. Well, you can have it so. My desertion, then, from the cause of temperance will—I am fully aware—injure it and disappoint my faithful supporters. To them I tender my sincere regret for the trouble I am causing them, and I thank them for the help they have given me in the past. My action—which must seem incomprehensible to them—is due to no unworthy motive of. . .

CANON KELLY (*with meaning*). Unless sordid family considerations can be called unworthy.

SHEEDY. Quite so. I think we all understand the influences which have forced Father Moran to come to this extraordinary decision.

There are murmurs of assent. FATHER TOM is about to make an angry retort, but controls himself.

FATHER TOM (*calmly*). Gentlemen, I have finished.

CANON KELLY. Do you intend to play out this farce to the end? Think it over, Father Tom. I am an old man, and I give the advice which my experience tells me is best. Look at the irreparable injury you will be doing to the temperance cause. You fail at the most critical moment of the crusade, and the whole movement must fall to the ground. Its last state will be worse than the first. Reconsider your decision—don't play false to the men who trust in you. Don't. Think it over.

SHEEDY. Don't go back on us, Father Moran.

MIKE. Don't leave your friends in the lurch, Father Tom.

FATHER TOM. My mind is made up. I can come to no other decision.

CANON KELLY. Well, I can do no more. I feel a fool for having come here to this fiasco, but I don't envy your feelings. No, I don't envy the feelings of a deserter.

Prepares to go out. Others prepare to leave also.

HAMMON. I think we have had enough of this. How they will laugh at me in the club.

ROYCROFT. I always did mistrust these (*happening to notice that CANON KELLY is within hearing*) . . . gatherings.

SHEEDY. Father Moran, had you not better announce your decision to the crowd from the window? They are impatient for the procession to start. They will require an explanation.

CANON KELLY. Do, and get finished with it. We shall certainly cut a ridiculous figure before the public.

Amid silence FATHER TOM goes to window and raises it. A great cheering goes up from the crowd as they see him. It continues for some minutes, while he stands motionless. At length he raises his hand for silence, which gradually falls.

FATHER TOM (*in a loud, clear voice*). People of Iniscurragh, I came here to preach—(*a loud burst of cheering*

interrupts him)—I cannot tell them (*turning away with a groan*). I cannot. . . (*Silence, during which they watch him impatiently.*)

CANON KELLY. You do it, Mr. Sheedy.

SHEEDY. I would much prefer not, Canon.

CANON KELLY. Then, come, I'll speak to them from the hotel porch. I hope they will disperse quietly.

MIKE. Come on, Barney. 'Tis the first and last temperance meeting we'll ever be at. (*To REPORTER.*) You needn't mind about the V.C. now.

They all go out slowly, leaving FATHER TOM standing near window with a white drawn face. A hush falls upon the crowd outside ; CANON KELLY is speaking from the hotel steps. The few words he says are inaudible, but at the close there are loud indignant shouts and cries. MRS. MORAN enters quietly.

MRS. MORAN (*in awe-stricken tones*). Is it all over ?

FATHER TOM. It's all over, mother. I am going to retire to a monastery, and spend the rest of my life there.

MRS. MORAN. Oh, Tom !

FATHER TOM. Mother, what brings you here ? Why did you not go home ?

MRS. MORAN. I could not leave you, lad. I knew you would be upset and troubled, God help us. Tom, you'll be coming home with me now—won't you ?

FATHER TOM. Yes, mother. (*He pulls back hangings and glances out window. In a voice trembling with emotion.*) Look at them. There they go . . . crowding into the public houses . . . (*With a heartbreaking cry of agony he throws himself on his knees and bows his head on table.*) There they go. . . My God ! My God ! The men I would have saved !

MRS. MORAN *bends over him with eyes of compassion, one hand resting caressingly on his shoulder.*

CURTAIN.

CRUSADERS was first performed on January 17, 1917, at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, by the National Theatre Society. It was produced by J. Augustus Keogh, with the following caste :—

FATHER TOM NOLAN
STEVE MORAN
KATE MORAN
TESSIE
WILLIE PAT
REV. CANON KELLY, P.P.
REV. MR. ROYCROFT
EDWARD SHEEDY
MICHAEL HAYES
BARNEY DOYLE
MR. HAMMON
THADE MULLIGAN
REPORTER

Fred O'Donovan
J. Augustus Keogh
Eileen O'Doherty
Irene Kelly
Arthur Shields
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